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1953

# PORT OF ENTRY

## ANNUAL REPORT

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Highway Commission 1953 Port of Entry  
Location Map

*Advertising Office*

**Montana Highway Commission**

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### TOURIST TRAFFIC DECLINES SLIGHTLY

After seven consecutive years of tourist traffic increases, Montana experienced a slight decline in visitor vehicular traffic during the summer months of 1953. Counts of out-of-state cars, taken at the nine port of entry greeter stations, showed a 3.5% decrease from 1952, dropping from a record 273,532 vehicles in 1952 to 263,741 in 1953.

The 1953 total, however, was 32,606 cars better than the summer count of 1951. Automobiles from every state in the Union and 33 foreign countries were checked at the stations.

Six of the nine ports showed increases while three marked up declines. A traffic analysis, station by station, will be found later on in this report.

The dip in tourist motor traffic during the summer of 1953 was reported from neighboring states also of the Pacific Northwest. Reports that are coming in from many sections of the country, indicate that the crest of the postwar travel boom appears to have been reached. The tourist business was spotty in 1953, some sections up, others down.

### CANADIAN BUSINESS IMPROVES

Everyone seems to be in agreement that our Canadian tourist business was the best ever. Removal of limitations on the amount of money that Canadians can spend in the U. S., plus the near equality of the Canadian and American dollar, gave an impetus to Canadian spending in this country.

Because of a lack of port of entry greeter stations on the Canadian border, Montana's checking of Canadian tourist traffic is not very accurate. In order to improve this, it was suggested that we use the Canadian car and passenger counts taken at the 13 U. S. Customs border stations.

For the three summer months, 57,826 Canadian vehicles were counted entering Montana by U. S. Customs (see separate report), or 23,764 more cars than were counted at the State Highway port of entry stations. If the U. S. Customs count is used, it would give Montana a record count of tourist cars for 1953 as follows:

263,741 out-of-state cars checked at port of entry stations  
23,764 additional Canadian cars counted at U. S. Customs

287,505 total out-of-state cars in Montana during summer of 1953

Such a total would be 13,973 more tourist vehicles than were counted during the record 273,532 vehicles in 1952.

These Canadian figures are added to this report this year in order to form a basis for comparison in 1954 when the Canadian-U. S. Customs counts will become a permanent part of the annual Montana Travel Study. Although this count is not all-inclusive, it does give an accurate number of Canadians coming into Montana from the north.

To induce more Canadians to visit Montana, the State Advertising Committee voted recently to contract for advertising in Canadian publications.



CANADIAN TOURIST TABULATIONS

Montana's system of counting Canadian tourist cars is very loose, mainly because we maintain no port of entry greeter stations along the Montana-Canadian border. Columbia Falls and Culbertson are the principal entry points for Canadian vehicles, although a number are counted at Missoula and Miles City.

Since our method of contacting Canadian visitors is not very reliable, our statistics vary. The 1953 total of Canadian vehicles of 34,062 for three months, is 6,147 less than were counted during the same period in 1952; yet from all sections of the state come reports that there were more Canadians in Montana this year than ever before. Unquestionably, thousands of Canadian cars crossed into Montana and were never counted.

In order to improve our Canadian tourist statistics, we asked the U. S. Bureau of Customs to provide a tabulation of Canadian cars and passengers entering the United States at Montana border stations during the months of June, July and August. By utilization of such counts annually, a much more reliable count of Canadian visitors will be obtained.

<u>U. S. Port</u>	<u>Summer Canadian Passenger and Car Counts at Border Ports</u>					
	<u>June</u>		<u>July</u>		<u>August</u>	
	<u>Cars</u>	<u>Pass.</u>	<u>Cars</u>	<u>Pass.</u>	<u>Cars</u>	<u>Pass.</u>
Raymond	1487	5037	2143	7503	2187	7009
Whitetail	501	1760	690	2405	494	1732
Scobey	258	944	382	1478	407	1558
Opheim	198	654	470	1738	426	1532
Morgan	603	1910	1211	4664	918	3453
Turner	240	865	375	1340	510	1675
Havre	279	948	635	2196	567	1866
Whitlash	41	98	60	202	62	169
Sweet Grass	7984	25148	9150	29820	9015	27730
Del Bonita	66	219	96	331	150	596
Piegan	1050	3505	4550	14159	4635	14594
Chief Mountain	390	1383	1995	6970	2065	7220
Roosville	<u>307</u>	<u>615</u>	<u>625</u>	<u>1903</u>	<u>605</u>	<u>2145</u>
Totals	13,404	43,086	22,382	74,709	22,041	71,279
3 Month Totals	<u>Cars</u>		<u>Passengers</u>			
All Stations	57,827		189,074			

The car total, you will note, exceeds the Montana count by some 23,000. This despite the fact that undoubtedly there were hundreds of Canadian cars from the east and west that entered Montana at State Highway Commission port of entry stations and were counted, and yet they did not come into Montana via a U. S. border custom station to be included in the above tabulation. Thus the total of 57,827 cars does not represent all Canadian cars in Montana during these summer months.



## ORIGIN OF MONTANA'S TOURISTS

Montana's tourist pattern did not change much from the previous year. In the No. 1 spot as Montana's biggest tourist supplier is Washington, followed by California. Since many of Washington's cars are crossing Montana from west to east, and vice versa, it is contended that California is really Montana's No. 1 tourist state.

In third place, the same as a year ago, was Minnesota. It is interesting to note that the top ten states in 1953 are the same as in 1952. There were a few changes in positions, that's all. Idaho moved up to fourth place, switching with Illinois. Wisconsin climbed from ninth to eighth, North Dakota slipped from eighth to tenth and Utah moved from tenth to ninth.

Texas, which has made a steady climb the last few years, retained its eleventh place in sending tourists to the Treasure State. The number of Texas cars did increase from 6,537 in 1952 to 6,677 in 1953. (summer count)

Summing up, it appears that about a third of Montana's tourist business comes off the Pacific coast, another big segment comes from the midwestern states of Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. Smallest sectional contributors are New England and the deep South.

## WHY PORT OF ENTRY STATIONS?

Montana's port of entry system was established back in 1936 for two reasons: 1. To greet incoming tourists. Montana is one of the very few states that bother to say "howdy" to visitors. 2. To obtain accurate and reliable tourist statistics.

The very fact that Montana counts cars and passengers for a three-month period is ample proof that Montana's tourist statistics are accurate and authentic.

In addition to the counting of cars and passengers, 10,000 questionnaire cards were handed to visitors who were asked to mail them, upon their return home, to the State Advertising Office. From the tourist questionnaire card replies, will be compiled the annual Montana Travel Study including information on how much the average tourist spent per day while in Montana, how long he stayed, what kind of accommodations he used, how far he traveled while in the state, and what he thinks about the Land of Shining Mountains as a vacation state.

That incoming visitors like Montana's system of greeting them, is seen from the many letters and cards complimenting the state which is received each year. Here are some typical comments. An Idahoan writes, "Montana has the best public relations with tourists in the United States."

From Oregon: "Literature and maps given us at port of entry was most helpful."

From Nevada: "I as an individual think your welcome to Montana is a wonderful thing. The boys did a nice job."

Of the questionnaire cards returned so far, 72 were enthusiastic about Montana's ports of entry. Only 4 objected specifically at being requested to stop at the stations.



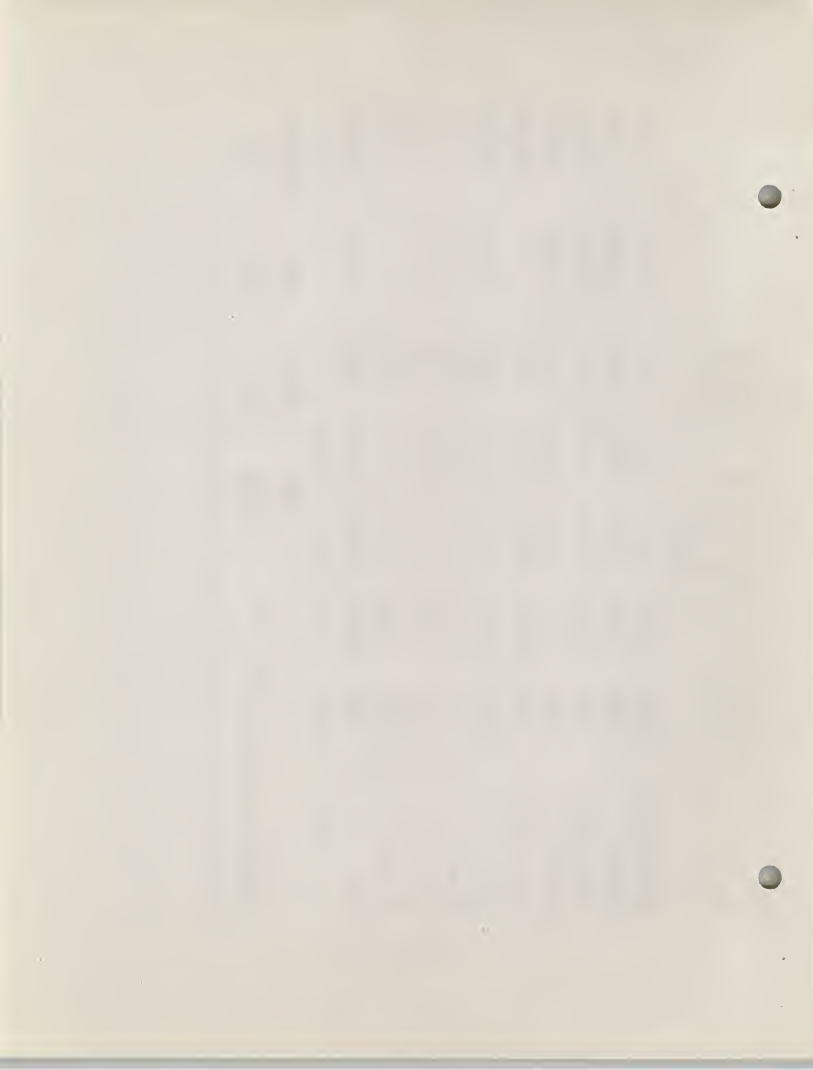


1953 PORT OF ENTRY TOURIST VEHICLE AND PASSENGER COUNTS

<u>Station Location</u>	<u>% of Travel</u>	<u>Vehicles</u>				<u>Passengers</u>	
		<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>
Missoula	20.0%	52,818	38,759	50,528	48,999	115,038	89,702
Columbia Falls	19.1%	50,382	75,369	50,918	46,417	119,074	185,695
Miles City	11.6%	30,552	35,676	28,265	29,022	63,040	65,312
West Yellowstone	10.8%	28,667	26,893	23,361	19,481	61,461	59,460
Gardiner	10.6%	27,854	28,944	30,663	33,883	80,675	80,020
Rockvale	8.6%	22,678	21,336	14,893	17,134	35,976	34,454
Crow Agency	8.2%	21,573	19,353	16,200	15,420	45,418	42,115
Culbertson	7.9%	20,811	19,335	16,474	14,125	47,382	43,861
Lima	<u>3.2%</u>	<u>8,436</u>	<u>7,867</u>	<u>7,833</u>	<u>7,390</u>	<u>19,327</u>	<u>17,048</u>
TOTALS	100.0%	263,741	273,532	239,135	231,771	587,391	617,667

	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUGUST</u>	<u>SEPTEMBER</u>
Tourist Vehicle Counts by Months in 1952	40,112	116,668	87,228	19,733
Per cent of Travel by Months	15.2%	44.2%	33.1%	7.5%

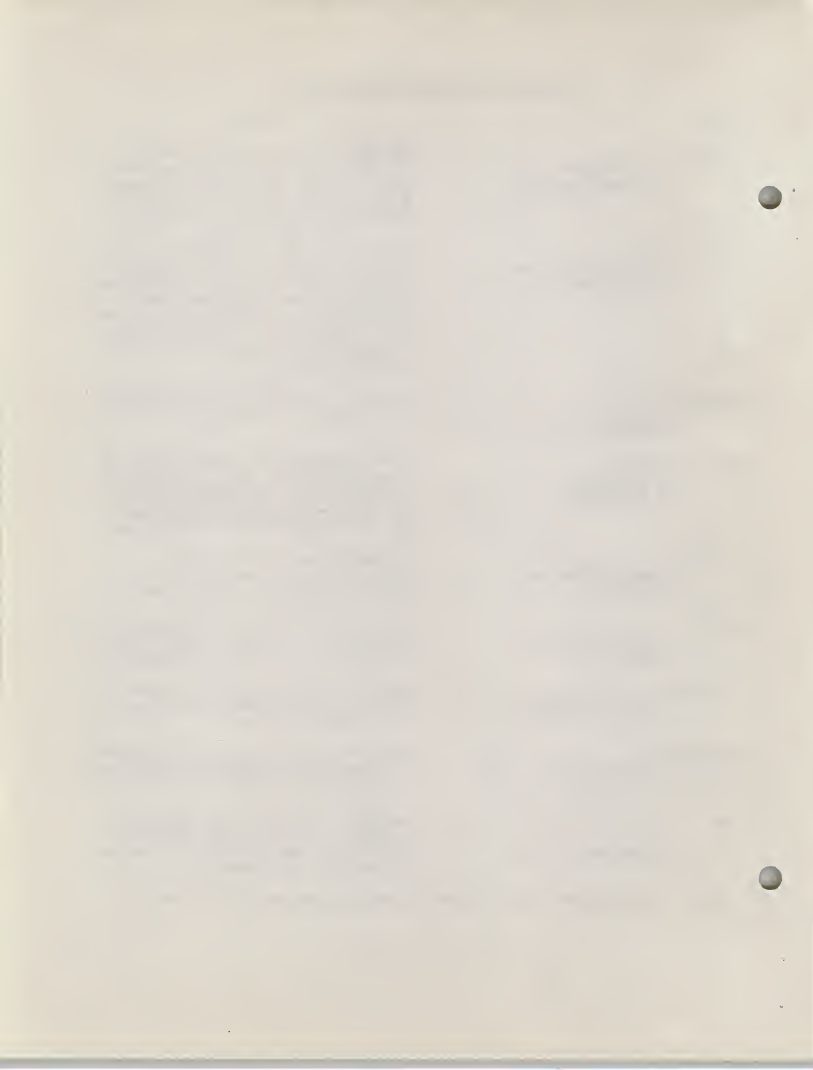
Port of Entry stations opened June 14, 1953 and closed September 8, 1953



Port of Entry Tourist Traffic Analysis

<u>Station</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Missoula- Up 14,059 Cars 36% Increase over '52	The Missoula station enjoyed its largest tourist traffic the past summer. With the completion of the many highway projects on U. S. 10 traffic east and west increased considerably.
Columbia Falls- 24,987 Vehicles down 32% Decrease	There are a number of reasons for this decline. Unquestionably some traffic switched back to U. S. 10. Glacier Park's Going to the Sun highway was late in opening, and attendance in Glacier went down compared to 1952. The completion of Hungry Horse dam may have had something to do with it.
Miles City- 5,154 Cars Down 14% Decline	Despite the drop, 1953 was the second best year for the Miles City station.
West Yellowstone- 1,774 Cars Up 6% Increase	West Yellowstone for several years has shown a consistent climb. However, incoming traffic to W. Yellowstone dropped this summer due mainly to the new south entrance road into Yellowstone.
Gardiner- 1,090 Vehicles Down 3% Decrease	Gardiner's tourist traffic came very close to equaling record 1952. The decline parallels the state decrease.
Rockvale- 1,342 Car Increase 6% Increase	Once the Cooke City road was open it stayed open this summer. This station has a high percentage of non-stops.
Crow Agency- 2,220 Car Increase 13% up	Much of the Iowa, Nebraska and Texas traffic comes thru here and it is a good, healthy increase.
Culbertson- 1,476 Vehicles Up 7% Increase	Much of this increase can be attributed to an upswing in Canadian traffic from the eastern provinces.
Lima- 569 car Increase Approximately 1% Up	In 1952 U. S. 91 was torn up in long stretches. With this work finished, traffic improved, particularly California and Utah northbound.

Summary: Six stations showed increased traffic, three stations were down.



TOURIST TRAVEL BY STATES  
Vehicle Count  
1953

	<u>State</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1950</u>
1.	Washington	39,602	38,240	36,779	37,472
2.	California	33,862	34,930	31,159	30,958
3.	Minnesota	16,337	16,138	14,444	14,272
4.	Idaho	13,189	12,856	11,718	11,823
5.	Illinois	12,791	13,294	12,411	11,099
6.	Oregon	11,941	12,528	10,809	10,105
7.	Michigan	8,051	8,042	7,939	9,701
8.	Wisconsin	7,500	7,139	6,600	6,434
9.	Utah	6,935	7,057	6,576	6,166
10.	North Dakota	6,873	7,604	7,222	6,892
11.	Texas	6,677	6,537	5,811	4,812
12.	Iowa	6,470	6,264	5,117	5,796
13.	Colorado	5,727	6,291	5,357	5,346
14.	Ohio	5,149	5,142	4,305	4,378
15.	Wyoming	5,093	5,963	5,117	4,805
16.	Kansas	4,227	4,595	3,611	3,373
17.	Nebraska	3,967	4,240	3,467	3,486
18.	Indiana	3,822	3,994	3,467	3,071
19.	Missouri	3,778	3,884	3,444	3,453
20.	New York	3,491	3,775	3,037	3,016
21.	South Dakota	2,909	3,392	3,013	3,315
22.	Pennsylvania	2,821	3,009	2,511	2,422
23.	Oklahoma	2,380	2,544	1,985	1,871
24.	Arizona	1,565	1,723	1,578	1,449
25.	New Jersey	1,484	1,586	1,411	1459
26.	Florida	1,255	1,286	1,004	890
27.	New Mexico	1,220	1,149	1,028	1,088
28.	Massachusetts	1,039	1,313	1,172	1,135
29.	Nevada	924	875	813	482
30.	Virginia	865	766	717	641
31.	Louisiana	842	656	598	682
32.	Maryland	644	766	694	771
33.	Connecticut	612	520	574	629
34.	Tennessee	565	574	526	516
35.	Georgia	542	574	430	466
36.	Kentucky	477	520	407	445
37.	Arkansas	457	492	383	381
38.	North Carolina	443	410	383	520
39.	Mississippi	359	383	335	406
40.	Alabama	347	328	191	350
41.	South Carolina	255	219	167	203
42.	West Virginia	250	356	263	315
43.	Washington D. C.	234	383	383	525
44.	Vermont	230	356	215	308
45.	New Hampshire	192	164	143	233
46.	Rhode Island	168	191	167	234
47.	Maine	134	137	120	216
48.	Delaware	130	137	96	144
	Canada	34,062	40,209	29,438	22,969
	Foreign	854			
	GRAND TOTAL	263,741	273,532	239,135	231,823

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## FOREIGN CARS &amp; PASSENGERS - 1953

<u>COUNTRY</u>	<u>NO. CARS</u>	<u>NO. PASSENGERS</u>
Alaska	468	1411
Hawaii	226	691
Germany	37	93
Canal Zone	35	112
England	16	37
Japan	9	31
Philippines	5	15
Cuba	5	14
Yukon Territory	5	12
Mexico	4	12
France	4	11
Guam	3	10
Australia	3	7
Bahamas	3	7
Scotland	3	4
Puerto Rico	2	8
Austria	2	7
West Indies	2	7
Netherlands	2	6
New Foundland	2	6
Okinawa	2	6
Costa Rica	1	6
British Honduras	1	5
China	1	5
Denmark	1	5
Greece	1	5
Czechoslovakia	1	3
India	1	3
Africa	1	2
British East Indies	1	2
New Brunswick	1	2
South Africa	1	2
Sweden	1	2
Switzerland	1	2
French Morocco	1	1
Italy	1	1
Norway	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	854	2554





Preliminary Report to Resurvey Port of Entry Stations

The Montana Advertising Committee, at a meeting in July, requested the State Highway Commission to resurvey its port of entry system with an eye toward: 1. More inclusive tourist vehicle counts. 2. Better serving of Montana communities. The Commission directed that such a study be made in cooperation with the Chief Highway Engineer and the State Advertising Director.

To open such a study, herewith is presented some pertinent material, including a map that gives location of the present nine stations, distances from Montana borders to such stations, and highways on which no stations are located.

STOPPING. Most all stations have at least three approach signs to the port of entry station reading, "Montana Port of Entry Station Ahead--All Out of State Visitors Please Stop." Stopping is voluntary. There is no emphasis on must.

Location of station seems to be prime factor regarding the number of tourists who do stop at our stations.

Here are the stop and non-stop car totals for 1952 and 1953:

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>
Cars Stopped	204,159	195,188
Non-Stop Cars	69,373	68,553
Percent of Non-Stops	25%	24%

Location of station seems to be the prime factor regarding the number of tourists who stop at any one station.

STATION STOPS. In checking stops and non-stops by station, we find the following:

<u>Station</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Percentage Stopping</u>
Gardiner	On Montana-Yellowstone border	92.7%
Lima	20 miles from Idaho border	84.8%
West Yellowstone	1 mile from Yellowstone Park	80.6%
Miles City	120 miles from N. Dak. border	79.0%
Crow Agency	45 miles from Wyoming border	78.5%
Culbertson	30 miles from No. Dakota border	70.9%
Columbia Falls	121 miles from Idaho border	68.9%
Missoula	100 miles from Idaho border	68.7%
Rockvale	60 miles from Wyoming border	62.0%

It must be concluded from this table that the closer the station is located to the state boundary, the higher percentage of tourist cars stop. Rockvale is bad because not many Wyoming cars bother to stop--many of them carry shoppers headed for Billings. Missoula, Columbia Falls and Miles City are far inside the state and have straight, high-speed approaches leading to the stations. Many cars would stop but are past these stations before the driver realizes the station is there.



HIGHWAYS LACKING PORT OF ENTRY STATIONS. From the accompanying map it will be seen that on a number of highways leading into the state there are no port of entry stations.

Highways blocked out in black on the map are lacking entry stations. On highways marked with a checkerboard effect, a tourist may or may not encounter a station, depending on which direction he goes. Below are listed highways on which no count, or a partial count, is made because of the absence of port of entry stations.

U. S. Highway 93—Northbound thru the Bitterroot Valley. Some California travel to Glacier Park is being missed on this highway. Southbound traffic out of Canada thru Eureka and Whitefish is also not counted unless it goes east.

U. S. Highway 10-A—Eastbound. If the traveler circles around in the northwest corner of the state and does not head for Glacier Park on U. S. 2, he is missed. We do not believe a great number of motorists just stay in the northwest corner of the state.

U. S. Highway 2—Eastbound—here is the northern leg of the U. S. Highway 10-A "leak." We think it negligible.

U. S. Highway 89 and Mont. 17—This is an important "leak." Unless the Canadian tourist cuts west thru Glacier Park onto U. S. 2 and passes the Columbia Falls station, he is not counted. (Please note that the Columbia Falls port is the only Highway Commission station which counts two ways—both westbound and eastbound. All other stations count only incoming tourist traffic, but because there is no Montana port of entry on the Canadian border, a count is taken both directions at Columbia Falls.)

A station at Babb would catch both streams of traffic entering at Chief Mountain and Piegan. From the Canadian customs tabulation chart, you will note that 10,235 cars entered at Piegan during the summer months, while 4,450 came by way of Chief Mt. for a total of 14,685 going by Babb. Passengers carried by these cars totaled—47,831.

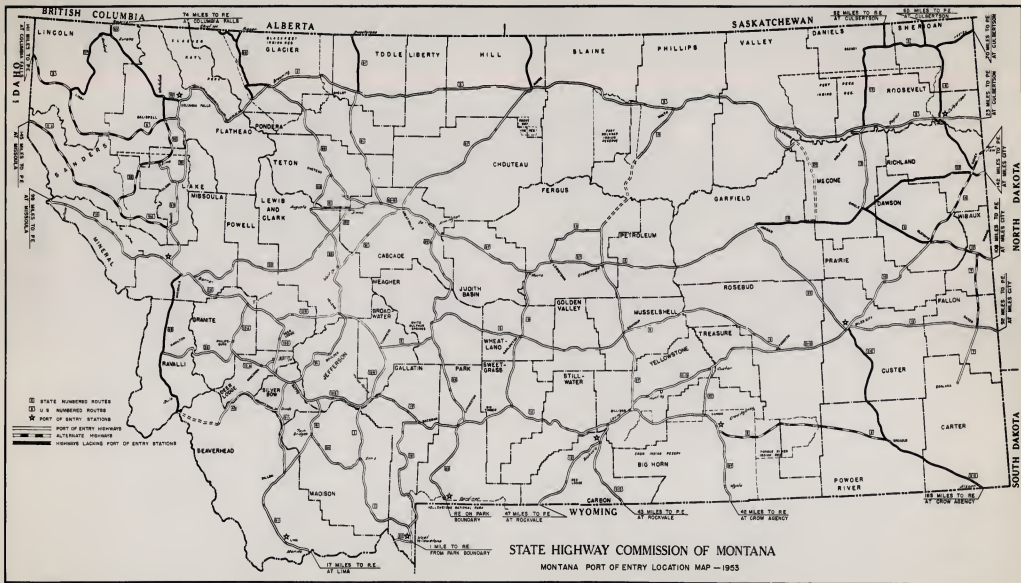
U. S. Highway 91—Here is another main artery from Canada which is not covered. From the Canadian customs tabulation, we find that 26,149 cars came thru Sweet Grass during the summer months carrying 82,698 passengers. This traffic is comparable to that at our stations located at Crow Agency, Rockvale and Culbertson and exceeds that at Lima by a large margin.

Other Canadian Highways—A glance at the map shows that other entry points, some small, and some not so small along the Canadian border are not covered. The one at Raymond carries the next largest traffic. It is possible for a motorist to go either by way of Mont. 13 or Mont. 16 into the state and not be counted since Mont. 16 comes in behind our port of entry at Culbertson.

U. S. Highway 10 and Mont. 14, 16 and 18—Travel over Mont. 18 is increasing and will continue to increase when this Central Montana highway is completed. At present it is possible for a tourist to enter Montana at Wibaux on U. S. 10 and take Mont. 18 out of Glendive and never be counted. Or he could enter from North Dakota on Mont. 14 and 23 - turn either north on Mont. 16 or go onto Mont. 18 and not be counted.

U. S. 212 and Mont. 8—Although U. S. 212 heads into Miles City, it comes in behind the Highway Commission port of entry which is located on the eastern outskirts of Miles City.





STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION OF MONTANA

MONTANA PORT OF ENTRY LOCATION MAP - 1953





